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Executive Registry  
66-998

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

# EXECUTIVE MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

EXECUTIVE MEMORANDUM No. 154

DATE 7 March 1966

TO:

Deputy Director (Plans)  
Deputy Director (Intelligence)  
Deputy Director (Science & Technology)  
Deputy Director (Support)

~~Comptroller~~

Inspector General

General Counsel

~~Assistant~~ Director for National Estimates

D/DCI/NIFE

ROOM NO.

O-ExDir:sbo

Distribution:

- 1 - Ea adse w/cy NSAM 341
- 1 - ER w/cy NSAM 341
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downgrading and  
declassification

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

March 2, 1966

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NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 341

TO : The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense  
The Administrator of the Agency for International Development  
The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency  
The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff  
The Director of the United States Information Agency

SUBJECT: The Direction, Coordination and Supervision of Interdepartmental Activities Overseas.

To assist me in carrying out my responsibilities for the conduct of foreign affairs, I have assigned to the Secretary of State authority and responsibility to the full extent permitted by law for the overall direction, coordination and supervision of interdepartmental activities of the United States Government overseas. Such activities do not include those of United States military forces operating in the field where such forces are under the command of a United States area military commander and such other military activities as I elect as Commander in Chief to conduct through military channels. The Secretary of State will discharge this authority and responsibility primarily through the Under Secretary of State and the regional Assistant Secretaries of State, who will be assisted by interdepartmental groups of which they will be executive chairmen, i.e., with full powers of decision on all matters within their purview, unless a member who does not concur requests the referral of a matter to the decision of the next higher authority.

Activities which are internal to the execution and administration of the approved programs of a single department or agency and which are not of such a nature as to affect significantly the overall U. S. overseas program in a country or region are not considered to be interdepartmental matters in the meaning of this NSAM. If disagreement arises at any echelon

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over whether a matter is interdepartmental or not in the meaning of this NSAM, the procedure set forth herein will be invoked which permits a dissenting department or agency to appeal from the decision of an executive chairman to the next higher authority.

1. The Senior Interdepartmental Group

To assist the Secretary of State in discharging his authority and responsibility for interdepartmental matters which cannot be dealt with adequately at lower levels or by present established procedures, including those of the Intelligence Community, the Senior Interdepartmental Group (SIG) is established. The SIG shall consist of the Under Secretary of State, Executive Chairman, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of the United States Information Agency, and the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Representatives of other departments and agencies with responsibility for specific matters to be considered will attend on invitation by the Chairman.

The Senior Interdepartmental Group will assist the Secretary of State by:

- a. ensuring that important foreign policy problems requiring interdepartmental attention receive full, prompt and systematic consideration;
- b. dealing promptly with interdepartmental matters referred by the Assistant Secretaries of State or raised by any of its members, or, if such matters require higher level consideration, reporting them promptly to the Secretary of State for appropriate handling;
- c. assuring a proper selectivity of the areas and issues to which the United States Government applies its resources;
- d. carrying out the duties and responsibilities set forth in NSAM 124 and related subsequent NSAMs of the Special Group (counterinsurgency), which is hereby abolished; and
- e. conducting periodic surveys and checks to verify the adequacy and effectiveness of interdepartmental overseas programs and activities.

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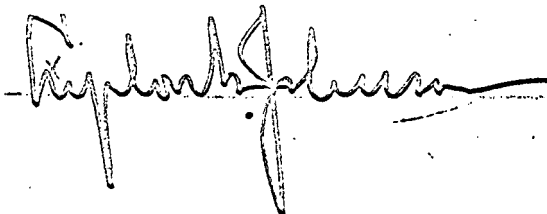
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The SIG will meet in the Department of State regularly and specially at the call of the Chairman. The Chairman will be supported by a full time staff of personnel furnished on his request by the departments and agencies represented on the SIG.

2. Interdepartmental Regional Groups

To assist the Assistant Secretaries of State, an Interdepartmental Regional Group (IRG) shall be established for each geographic region corresponding to the jurisdiction of the geographic bureaus in the Department of State. Each IRG shall be composed of the regional Assistant Secretary of State, Executive Chairman, and a designated representative from Defense, AID, CIA, the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, USIA and the White House or NSC staff. Representatives of other departments and agencies with responsibility for specific matters to be considered will attend on invitation by the Chairman. Meeting and staffing procedures will be patterned on the SIG.

The regional Assistant Secretaries, in their capacities as Executive Chairmen of the IRGs, will assure the adequacy of United States policy for the countries in their region and of the plans, programs, resources and performance for implementing that policy. They will be particularly watchful for indications of subversive aggression directed at the overthrow of governments in the region which the United States has a cogent interest to maintain, and, when such matters require higher level consideration, will recommend appropriate measures to higher authority for dealing with emergent critical situations in their regions.



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9 March 1966

TO: Recipients of Executive Memorandum #154 dated 7 March 1966

President Johnson, at a Cabinet Meeting on 4 March 1966, described the background and thrust of NSAM 341. This paper sets forth the general lines of the President's comments and should be attached to your copy of NSAM 341.

NSAM 341 was approved and promulgated in connection with the conduct of interdepartmental U. S. Government work abroad. By the nature of the structure of the U. S. Government, no one below the President is vested with authority to give overall direction, coordination, and supervision to overseas interdepartmental activities which continue to grow more and more complex. Overseas the ambassador has this general authority, but in Washington there has never been an organization directly comparable to the ambassador and his country team specifically authorized to guide overseas interdepartmental work from Washington.

NSAM 341 is an outgrowth of the State of the Union message of 1966 in which the President stressed the importance of modernizing and streamlining the Executive Branch. With that purpose in mind with regard to overseas operations, General Maxwell Taylor was requested to review his experiences as ambassador in South Vietnam in integrating the activities of several departments and to examine the operations of our Government in Washington to see whether we were properly organized to cope with complex overseas operations not only in Vietnam but anywhere in the world where our interests are involved. The basic task was to integrate the programs of a number of departments in the most effective way to attain U. S. objectives in the country or region involved.

General Taylor, assisted by several interdepartmental committees, completed his review and submitted a report which the President approved. NSAM 341 is the result of this work.

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There is nothing in the NSAM which changes the responsibilities of department and agency heads with regard to their own programs overseas or to their relations with the President. The NSAM merely sets up a mechanism through which every head of department or agency involved in overseas activities can participate effectively and in a timely manner in the formulation of decisions bearing on matters of common interest abroad. Any of these senior officials can carry an issue all the way to the President if he feels that a decision about to be taken is wrong. The President has instructed the Secretary of State to make it clear to the Executive Chairman of these interagency groups that they must arrange to invite participation by heads of departments or agencies who are not regular members whenever there are matters affecting them on the agenda of their interagency groups.

Arrangements provided by the NSAM are, in a sense, only clarifying, codifying, and regularizing good staff work. They are intended to be a help and a protection to all involved in the conduct of overseas responsibilities. The new arrangements are an important step in improving the conduct of our overseas business and all agencies and departments are asked to help the Secretary of State and the President in ensuring that the arrangements work.



L. K. White

Executive Director-Comptroller

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\* DD/P copy forwarded with the following note from ExDir:

"The DCI requests that the essence of the attached paper, as well as NSAM 341, be made generally known both within Headquarters components and to our field stations."

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